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Cynanche Trachealis

Or

Croup

By Samuel C. Dickenson of Dry
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Introduction

In viewing the numerous and almost unbounded extent of the human creation, who are subjected to pains and afflictions by disease, nearly all of which are submitted to the judgment of the medical practitioner; I think it behoves all who intend to practice the healing art, as the life of many will be intrusted to his care, to search into the nature and causes of diseases and to endeavour to become acquainted with such remedies as will safely and effectually remove them.

Accordingly, we find that the Croup (which constitutes the subject of the following essay) is a disease, (among the many) which has solicited the attention of medical writers; as being one, which, from the frequency of its occurrence, as also the distressing symptoms under which it is presented to the care of the practitioner

ditions, demands his most minute and attentive investigation.

Notwithstanding this disease has occupied the labours of several distinguished writers, some of whom are generally read; yet when I consider the subjects who are particularly liable to the ravages of its malignant effects, (I allude to children,) many of whom are incapable of communicating, or explaining the nature of their sufferings, and ~~as~~ the mature judgment of the physician is generally called upon to explore the nature and cause of such disease; likewise to administer such medicines as will effectually cure it; I think every attempt (even this imperfect one) to illustrate the subject may be attended with its advantages. If nothing more, it will at least recall to the memory a disease, which is often the opprobrium of our art.

But, in attempting a treatise upon this subject

fect I do not anticipate any thing new. Neither
could it be expected that one who has been so
little engaged in the practice ^{of physic}, should add any-
thing, after practitioners of great eminence
have had so much experience in treating it.
My remarks therefore, will be confined to ~~such~~
general ^{view} ~~circumstances~~ of its nature, symptoms
and causes, together with the treatment which
~~has~~ ^{has} been found most successful.

Cynanche Trachealis, or Croup

This disease, which by its fatal termina-
tion has cut off in the very germ of life
(if I may use the expression) so many of the
human family, is one, which has excited
some difference of opinion among medi-
cal practitioners. It has been contended by some,
that it is an inflammatory disease; while
others on the contrary have considered it as
spasmodic.

spasmodic. But, there is, probably, no case of it, in which both of these are not to a certain degree combined, and although the inflammatory symptoms may be generally most prominent, yet the existence of a spasmodic croup can not be denied. For there have been frequently cases in which suffocation has come on so suddenly, that it is impossible that inflammation which is (comparatively) a slow process, could produce such violent effects in so short a time.

During the last spring I witnessed a case of this kind in a child about nine months old, who from having been exposed to the cold and damp atmosphere the day before, was attacked with the most violent and of prepsive symptoms of spasmodic Croup. Which, notwithstanding large doses of the Emetic Tartar was administered together with the use of the warm bath and copious blood-letting, the child continued to
decline.

1840
The first of the month of January
was a day of great interest
to the people of this city
as it was the day on which
the first of the new year
was celebrated. The people
were all out in the streets
and the shops were all
open. The children were
all out playing in the
streets and the old people
were all out walking
in the parks. The day
was a day of great
joy and happiness to
all the people of this
city.

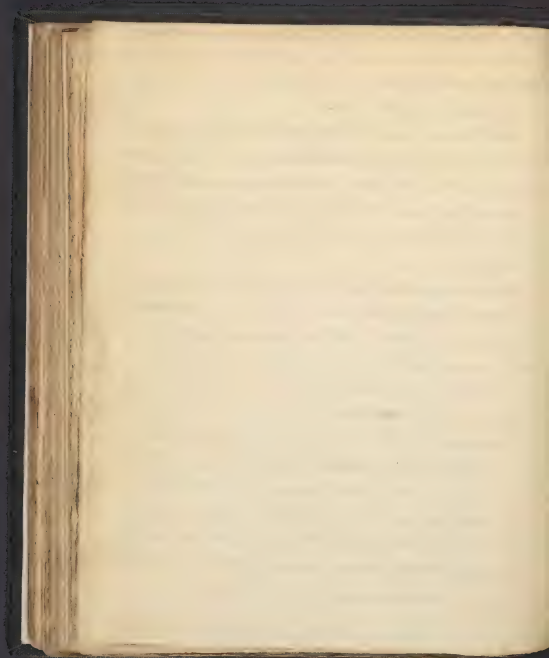
decline until Death in the space of twelve hours,
removed her sufferings.

The Croup is a disease particularly incident
to children; though it seldom attacks them at
the breast and rarely over ten years old. But
there are, however, instances of adults being con-
signed to the silent tomb by its fatal con-
sequences.

This disease, according to Doct: Cullen, sometimes
prevails epidemically, and is peculiar ~~to~~ ~~xxx~~
'to some families; but it is never contagious.
It generally comes on with a slight
fever & other symptoms of fever: Such as, heat
thirst, redness, &c.

Sometimes it comes on in the form of a cold,
and thus continues three or four days and then
it takes on the true form of the disease.

It likewise makes its attack very sudden;
and I have seen it terminate in death in the
space of twelve hours from its commencement.

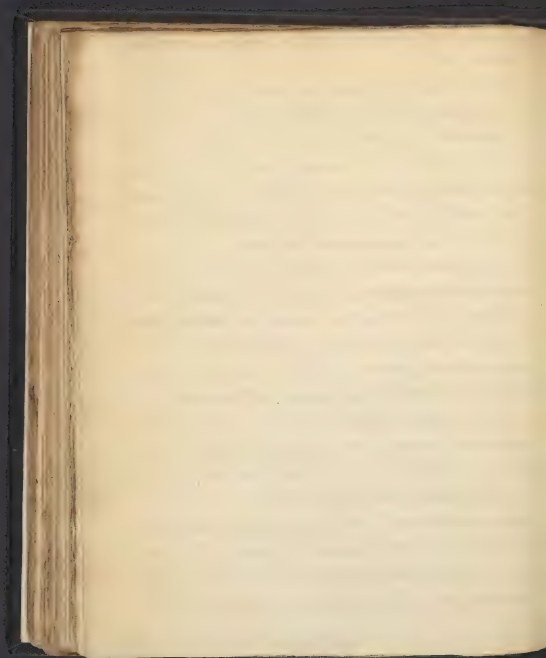


The peculiar symptoms which characterise this disease are, a difficult expiration attended with a whooping noise in inspiration, a hoarse dry cough, compared by some to the shrill barking of a dog, and sometimes attended with vomiting; deglutition is somewhat impeded, and there is a sense of stiffness about the Larynx and an increase frequency of the pulse.

As the disease advances respiration becomes more distressing and is beset with greater difficulty, the eyes become injected red and watery, the cheeks flushed, and the mouth is often lined with a viscid saliva. The patient complains of heat and the whole becomes attended with thirst, restlessness, and a continual desire to change from place to place.

Sometimes a degree of drowsiness comes on, from which, however, the little sufferer is often awaked by a violent cough and fits of suffocation.

Among the causes which produce this disease, the inflammation of the air and moisture appear to be the most general, as it prevails most frequently in the
winter

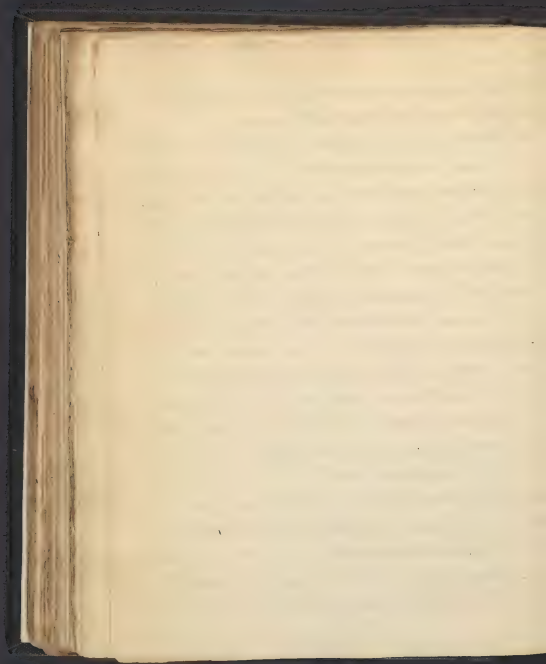


winter and spring seasons. It is also sometimes produced by marsh miasma and worms.

The duration of this disease is very equivocal, in some cases it has terminated in a few hours, and in others not for several days and ^{even} one or two weeks. Much however, depends upon the degree of inflammation, the violence of the spasm, and the strength and constitution of the patient.

From the dispositions of those who have died of this disease, it is observed, that there is always to be found a lymphatic incrustation, or membranous substance lining the larynx. That there never does exist a membrane I will not deny, as my observations have been very limited. But in the only two cases which I have seen, there was no membrane, but a collection of mucus.

From the violent effects of this disease upon the system, and also from its speedy and fatal termination, we should resort to the most active remedies to arrest its progress. Therefore, if there be much inflammation, we should first resort to bloodletting as the most proper.



proper remedy, and which has of itself proved ef-
ficacious in putting a stop to its rapid progress.

The blood may be drawn either from the fu-
gular vein in arm, proportioning the quan-
tity to the age and habit of the child; and
if the breathing be very difficult it should
be drawn in a large quantity.

If the symptoms should not abate, or if
they should return, topical bleeding by
the abstraction of acinus to the Trachea
should then be resorted to, but pro-
fuse general bleeding should not be omitted.

The abstraction of blood from the ear
has however, been objected to by some prac-
titioners, supposing them more apt to sink
under its operation. But, the hypothesis is
entirely erroneous, and in its effect, would be
often attended with the most mischievous con-
sequences. For, it has been satisfactorily proven
by very experienced practitioners, that blood-
letting

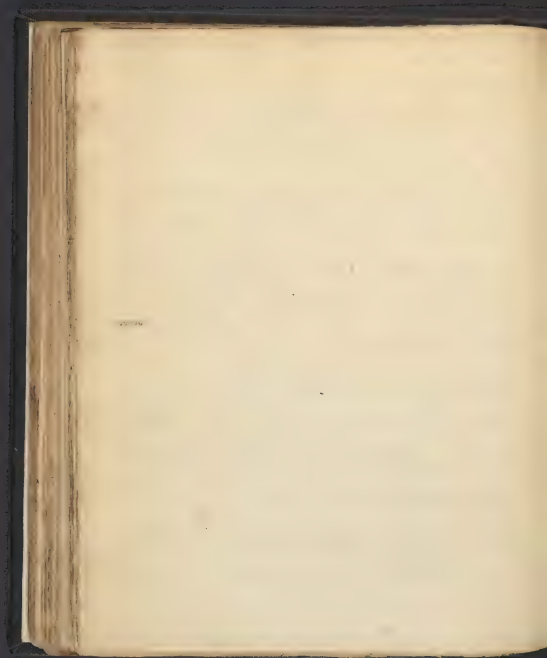


letting may be used with as much safety in the complaints of children, as in those of adults; and that they certainly recover much sooner from its effects.

There are however some cases in which the impending disposition of life is so strongly marked, as to require remedies of more speedy operation. In such cases, emetics generally succeed best, and have alone cured the disease when indicated early, and in sufficiently large doses to vomit freely.

Emetics are also highly beneficial in the inflammatory stages of Croup, after bleeding, appearing mechanically to remove the mucus from the lining membrane of the Trachea; and also, by relaxing the spasm and producing a determination to the surface.

The emetics generally used are, the Tartarised Antimony, Sulphate of Zinc, Ipecac. Sulimani's wine; turpeth. mineral combined with Ipecac.



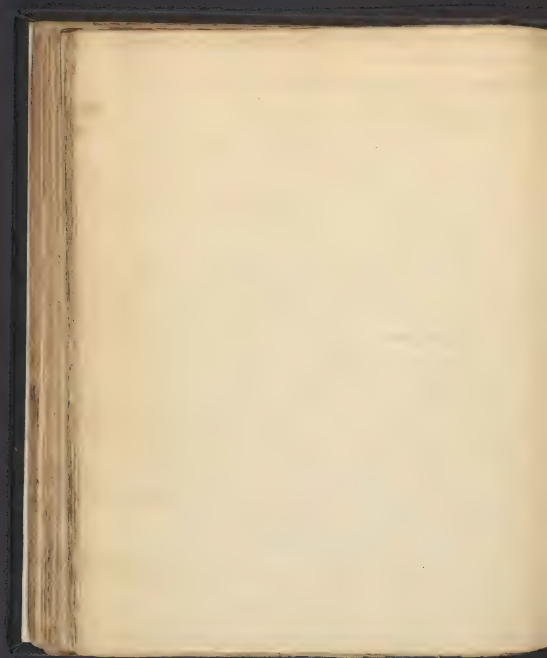
and squirts. But the Tartaric Acid is
generally fractured.

To assist the operation of such the warm
bath is very beneficial. and the ingenious
Dr Chahmud related a case in which he was
called to a child nine months old who was labour-
ing under the most violent and obstinate symp-
toms of Croup, in which he gave fifteen grains of
emetic Tartar without any effect until aided
by the warm bath and copious blood-letting. It
then had the desired effect, and snatched, as it
were, the little sufferer from the jaws of death.

The application of blisters over the trachea
behind the ears and even to the chest are of-
ten attended with the happiest effect.

When the bowels are costive we should
give Calomel purges in doses sufficiently large
to evacuate freely the alimentary canal.

This valuable medicine ~~is~~ first intro-
duced into the treatment of this disease by

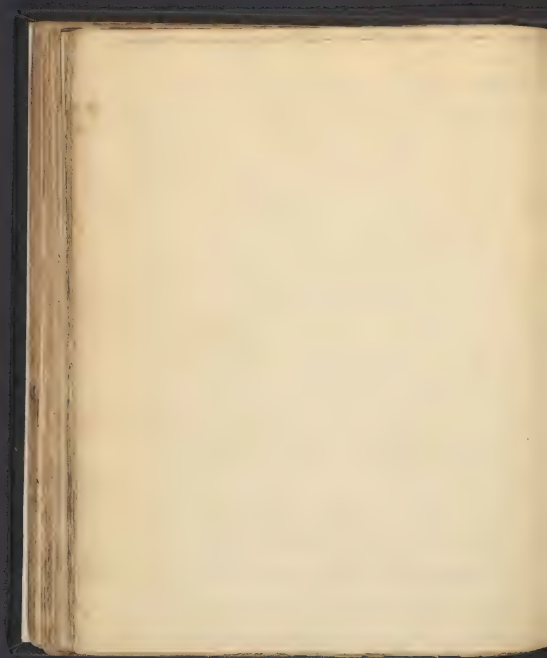


Dr. Hume, has been used in innumerable instances with the greatest benefit. And Dr. Hamilton observes, that in every case in which he has used it previous to the appearance of lividness of the lips and other mortal symptoms, he has succeeded effectually in curing the disease.

Diaphoretics, particularly the antimonial, (probation) are sometimes of service; especially if it depend on a suppressed perspiration.

When the disease becomes more mild, but there still remains a cough, or hoarseness, with a tightness of the chest and deficient expectoration, the *Polypoda Serica* given in decoction is attended with advantage. likewise the oysnel of squill may be used to assist the expectoration.

When this disease assumes the spasmodic form opiates and antispasmodics, such as Ether, if given in large doses at the commencement of the attack are often attended with very good



effect; and I have myself seen the Tinctura opii used in one case with the happiest success.

Afoetida has also been highly recommended, and Dr Millar has used it to a considerable extent both internally by the mouth and in the form of Enemata. I have never seen it used, but have no doubt that it would be of advantage.

The inhaling the vapour of warm water and vinegar I have seen used with great relief to the patient.

I must now conclude this short essay: too limited, I fear, for the important subject of which it treats.

In attempting a treatise upon this disease,

I must confess my want of sufficient practical experience to do it justice. But, as it has always been an established rule in this University, to require of each Candidate, for the degree of Doctor of Medicine, that he should submit for his examination, an essay upon some subject

Connected with the science of Medicine, I have
been induced to offer such remarks upon the fore-
going disease, as have come more particularly
under my observation. And, although I feel con-
scious of its imperfection, yet it has been composed
with such assiduity and labour that it will not,
I hope, be altogether unworthy the attention of the
learned gentlemen, who preside in this University.
Should I be successful in obtaining their appro-
bation, my wishes will be highly gratified and
my labour amply rewarded.

But I cannot stop here: I should think myself
destitute of humanity and gratitude, were I not to
avail myself of this opportunity of returning ^{you} my
sincere acknowledgments for the many advantages
derived from your instructive lectures.

That you may, in health, long continue to in-
pire, into the minds of your audience, those salu-
tary admonitions, is the wish of the

Author

